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On November 12, 2003

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Signature

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Case #F3313(C)

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Applicant: Aldred et al.

Serial No.: 10/630,563

Filed: July 30, 2003

For: PORTABLE DISPENSER FOR DISPENSING FROZEN AERATED EDIBLE PRODUCTS

Edgewater, New Jersey 07020
November 12, 2003

SUBMISSION OF PRIORITY DOCUMENT

Assistant Commissioner for Patents
Washington, D.C. 20231

Sir:

Pursuant to rule 55(b) of the Rules of Practice in Patent Cases, Applicant(s) is/are submitting herewith a certified copy of the European Application No. 02255299.6 filed July 30, 2002, upon which the claim for priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119 was made in the United States.

It is respectfully requested that the priority document be made part of the file history.

Respectfully submitted,

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Attestation

Die angehefteten Unterlagen stimmen mit der ursprünglich eingereichten Fassung der auf dem nächsten Blatt bezeichneten europäischen Patentanmeldung überein.

The attached documents are exact copies of the European patent application described on the following page, as originally filed.

Les documents fixés à cette attestation sont conformes à la version initialement déposée de la demande de brevet européen spécifiée à la page suivante.

Patentanmeldung Nr. Patent application No. Demande de brevet n°

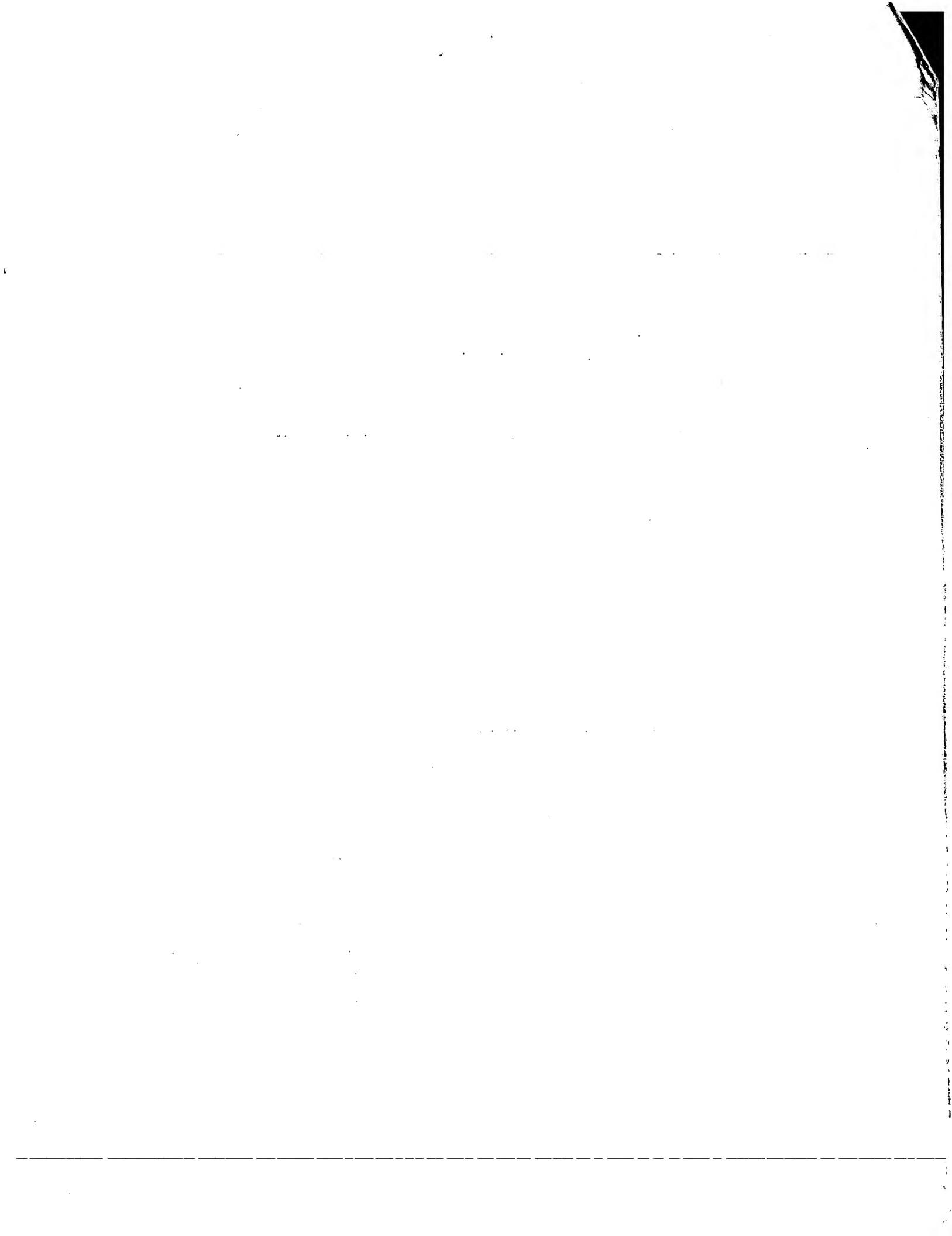
02255299.6

Der Präsident des Europäischen Patentamts;
Im Auftrag

For the President of the European Patent Office

Le Président de l'Office européen des brevets
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**Blatt 2 der Bescheinigung
Sheet 2 of the certificate
Page 2 de l'attestation**

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Application no.:
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Anmelder:
Applicant(s):
Demandeur(s):
UNILEVER PLC
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Bezeichnung der Erfindung:
Title of the invention:
Titre de l'invention:

Portable dispenser for dispensing frozen aerated edible products

In Anspruch genommene Priorität(en) / Priority(ies) claimed / Priorité(s) revendiquée(s)

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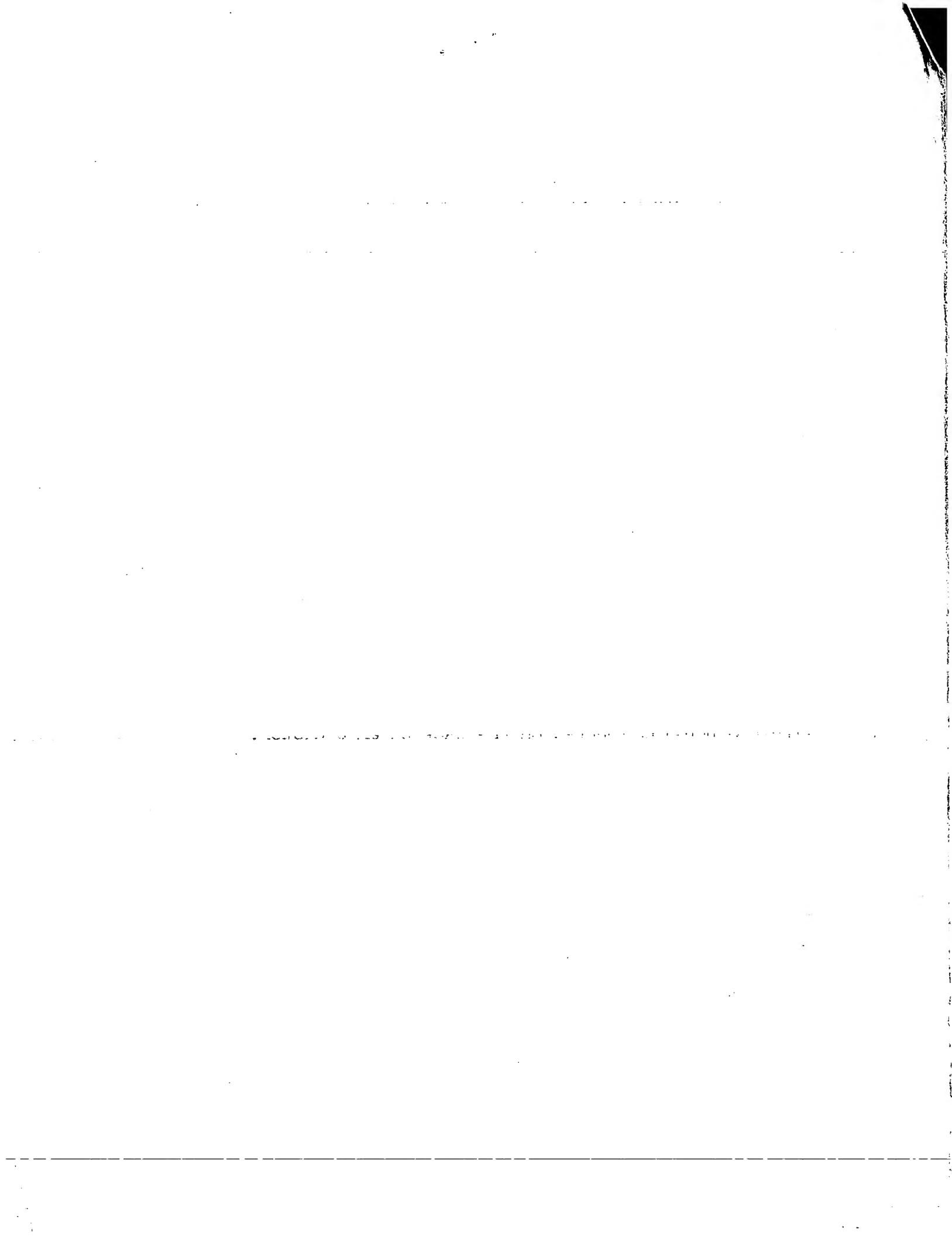
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PORTABLE DISPENSER FOR DISPENSING FROZEN AERATED EDIBLE PRODUCTSTechnical field

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The present invention relates to a portable dispenser for dispensing frozen aerated edible products. The invention more particularly relates to a portable dispenser for dispensing ice cream.

10

Background of the invention

Self contained portable dispensing devices for ice cream have been proposed for some time. A typical one is described in 15 WO95/16634 wherein such a device comprises a vessel for receiving and holding ice cream, said vessel being connected with a propellant and a discharge mechanism, and a pressurised container for the propellant, the whole device being contained within a housing mounted on the back of an operator.

20

Such a device suffers from major shortcomings which means that it did not result in a commercially successful product.

In order to be actually operated, the discharge mechanism must be 25 situated on the front of the operator. Since the discharge mechanism is connected with the vessel in the back of the operator, it requires pipelines and articulated connections which are costly, difficult to maintain, and a huge hygiene hazard since they must be cleaned very properly everyday. Also, the 30 whole pipelines and connections must be properly thermally insulated.

There is thus a need for a device which does not require pipelines and connection through which ice cream would have to flow and which would go from the back of the operator to the front.

5

It is now found that by disconnecting the functions of storage and discharge, it is possible to achieve this goal.

Definitions

10

"Insulated storing means" shall mean storing means with insulated walls, said insulated walls containing an insulating material having a thermal conductivity in the range of 0.5 to 50 milliWatt (metre Kelvin)⁻¹. The insulated material can be, for example, 15 polystyrene, polyurethane, fibreglass, or vacuum.

"Cooling means" shall mean containers containing a phase change material with a thermal capacity of between 150 and 300 kiloJoule/ kg over a temperature range of -25 to -5°C. Preferably 20 the phase change material is a eutectic material.

"Independent" shall mean without pipe connection through which frozen aerated product can be transferred.

25 "Single-handed actuated" shall mean that the dispensing means filled with a single dose cartridge can be carried and the ice cream can be dispensed using a single hand, leaving the other hand free for other purposes.

Brief description of the invention

It is the object of the present invention to provide a portable dispenser for dispensing frozen aerated edible product from 5 single dose cartridges containing said frozen aerated edible product, said dispenser comprising;

- o Thermally insulated storing means for storing single dose cartridges containing said frozen aerated edible product, 10 said thermally insulated storing means being adapted to be mounted on the back of a person, and
- o Dispensing means capable of holding a single dose cartridge containing said frozen aerated edible product outside the storing means, said dispensing means comprising discharge 15 means capable of discharging frozen aerated edible product out of said single dose cartridge.

By using single dose cartridges, the dispensing means are only in two positions, full or empty. If the cartridge was a multi dose 20 one, serious hygiene problems would still exist, particularly at the end of a vending session since the question of what to do with the product remaining in the cartridge in the dispensing means would immediately occur. Also since an undefined time can occur between two sales, having a multi dose cartridge in the 25 dispensing means would necessitate further thermal insulation of said dispensing means.

Preferably, in the portable dispenser according to the invention, the dispensing means are independent from the storing means. It 30 particularly means that the source of energy required for activated the discharge means is with the dispensing means itself.

Preferably also, the dispensing means are adapted to be mounted on the front of the person.

Most preferably, the dispensing means are single-handed actuated.

5 It means that the operator can use his other hand, for example to hold a cup or a wafer cone into which the ice cream is going to be discharged.

10 Most preferably also the thermally insulated storing means contains cooling means which allow the frozen products inside to be kept at the right temperature for at least 4 hours.

15 Most preferably also, the thermally insulated storing means comprises delivery means adapted to deliver individual single dose cartridges containing frozen aerated edible product. This allows for minimum re-heating when a cartridge is taken out of the storing means.

20 In an even more preferred embodiment of the invention delivery means are situated at a bottom of the storing means. This allows for the cartridges to be individually delivered by gravity.

25 Preferably, the single dose cartridges are frusto-conical. It allows for easy stacking one in the other once they have been emptied. In another embodiment also addressing the issue of disposing of and stacking the used cartridges, the discharge means comprise cartridge opening means which create at least one longitudinal cut or breaking line on the surface of the cartridge thus allowing for an easy stacking of cylindrical cartridges.

Detailed description of the invention

The present invention will be further described with reference to the accompanying drawings wherein:

5

Figure 1 represents a 3D schematic view of storing means according to the invention.

10 Figure 2 represents a 3D exploded view of storing means according to the invention.

Figure 3 represents a schematic view illustrating the delivery means in operation.

15 Figure 4 represents a schematic exploded 3D view of dispensing means according to the invention.

As it can be seen in Figure 1, thermally insulated storing means 1 are typically constituted by a harness 2 and a thermally insulated casing 3. This harness is adapted to fit on the back of an operator. Near the bottom of this thermally insulated casing are two delivery means 4 adapted to individually deliver single dose cartridges 5. The harness can also be fitted with a wafer cone holder not represented, from which individual cones will be taken and into which ice frozen aerated product contained in single dose cartridges will be dispensed.

30 Single dose cartridges can be cylindrical cartridge as described in WO 01/19205. In a preferred embodiment they are frusto conical. It allows for an easy stacking of used cartridges 5 one into another.

As illustrated on Figure 2, storing means 1 typically comprised by a carrying shell 6, secured to the harness 2, and a rear cover 7. Between the carrying shell 6 and the rear cover 7 is located an insulating box 8, the inside of it being adapted to receive a 5 cartridge cascade mechanism 9 which when put inside the insulated box is further covered by a rear insulating panel 10 made from a thermally insulating material generally similar to the one constituting the box 8. All these elements constituting the storing means are maintained together by elastic straps 11. 10 Between the insulated box 8 and the cascade mechanism 9 are preferably disposed cooling means 12, indicated in phantom lines on Figure 2, which are preferably situated at the top of the cascade mechanism 9 and on its two lateral sides perpendicular to the carrying shell 6 and the rear cover 7 but which can also, in 15 a less preferred embodiment, be located as disclosed on Figure 2. The cooling means 12 are preferably in the form of plastic containers filled with a suitable phase change material, preferably a eutectic material..

20 Near the bottom of the insulating box 8 are two openings 17, each of them adapted to let an individual cartridge, located in the cartridge cascade mechanism 9, entering delivery means 4. The presence of two delivery means 4 allows for the cascade mechanism to be loaded with two different type of cartridges, each type 25 corresponding, for example to a different flavour.

As illustrated on Figure 2, the delivery means 4 typically comprises a tumbler 13 made from an insulating material, preferably similar to the one used for the box 8 and the panel 30 10, e.g. polyurethane foam. This tumbler 13, is covered by a plastic shell 14, the shell 14 presents an opening 15 adapted to correspond with a cartridge well 16 in the tumbler 13. The tumbler 13 together with its shell 14 is mounted rotatable around

an axis parallel to the axis of the cartridges located in the cartridge cascade mechanism 9.

As illustrated on Figure 3, in order to take a single dose cartridge out of the storing means, the tumbler 13 is put in a position wherein an individual cartridge 5 is allowed to enter into the cartridge well 16. The tumbler is then rotated and the cartridge is allowed to fall from the tumbler onto a cartridge chute 18 described on Figure 2.

10

As illustrated on Figure 4, dispensing means 20 with an electric motor 21 connected to a battery 22 and adapted to actuate a dispensing pusher 23 inside a casing 24 into which a cartridge (not represented) has been first introduced. A switch mechanism 15 (not represented) activates the motor 21. This dispensing means is adapted to be held and activated by a single hand.

The operation of a device according to the invention is now going to be disclosed.

20

Before a vending session begins, the storing means are opened. Straps 11 are released and the rear cover 7 together with the insulating panel 10 are removed. Then either a new cascade mechanism 9, full with single dose cartridges is put in place of the old one or the rear panel 19 of the cascade mechanism 9 is removed and new cartridges are put manually in the cascade 9. Once it is completed, new cooling means 12 are introduced and fitted. The insulating panel 10 and the rear cover 7 are put back in place and the straps 11 are re-fitted.

30

If necessary a new battery 22 is fitted and the whole system is ready for use.

During a vending session, on demand, delivery means 4 are actuated and a single-dose cartridge 5 containing is removed from the thermally insulated casing 3. This cartridge 5 is then introduced in the dispensing means 20 and the motor 21 is 5 activating leading to the ice cream to be discharge from the cartridge into a chosen container which can be, for example, a wafer cone.

At the end of a vending session, the storing means are opened, 10 cooling means 12 are removed and stored into a freezer for 're-loading' and the unused single dose cartridges are removed and put into an appropriate freezer for storage until a further vending session.

Claims

1. Portable dispenser for dispensing frozen aerated edible product from single dose cartridges (5) containing said frozen aerated edible product, said dispenser comprising;
 - o Thermally insulated storing means (1) for storing single dose cartridges containing (5) said frozen aerated edible product, said thermally insulated storing means being adapted to be mounted on the back of a person, and
 - o Dispensing means (20) capable of holding a single dose cartridge containing said frozen aerated edible product outside the storing means, said dispensing means comprising discharge means capable of discharging frozen aerated edible product out of said single dose cartridge.
2. Portable dispenser according to claim 1 wherein the dispensing means (20) are independent from the storing means (1).
3. Portable dispenser according to claim 2 wherein the dispensing means (20) are adapted to be mounted on the front of the person.
4. Portable dispenser according to claim 3 wherein the dispensing means (20) are single-handed actuated.
5. Portable dispenser according to any preceding claim according to which the thermally insulated storing means (1) contains cooling means (12).

- 10 -

6. Portable dispenser according to any claim 1 to 4 according to which the thermally insulated storing means (1) comprises delivery means (4) adapted to deliver individual single dose cartridges (5) containing frozen aerated edible product.

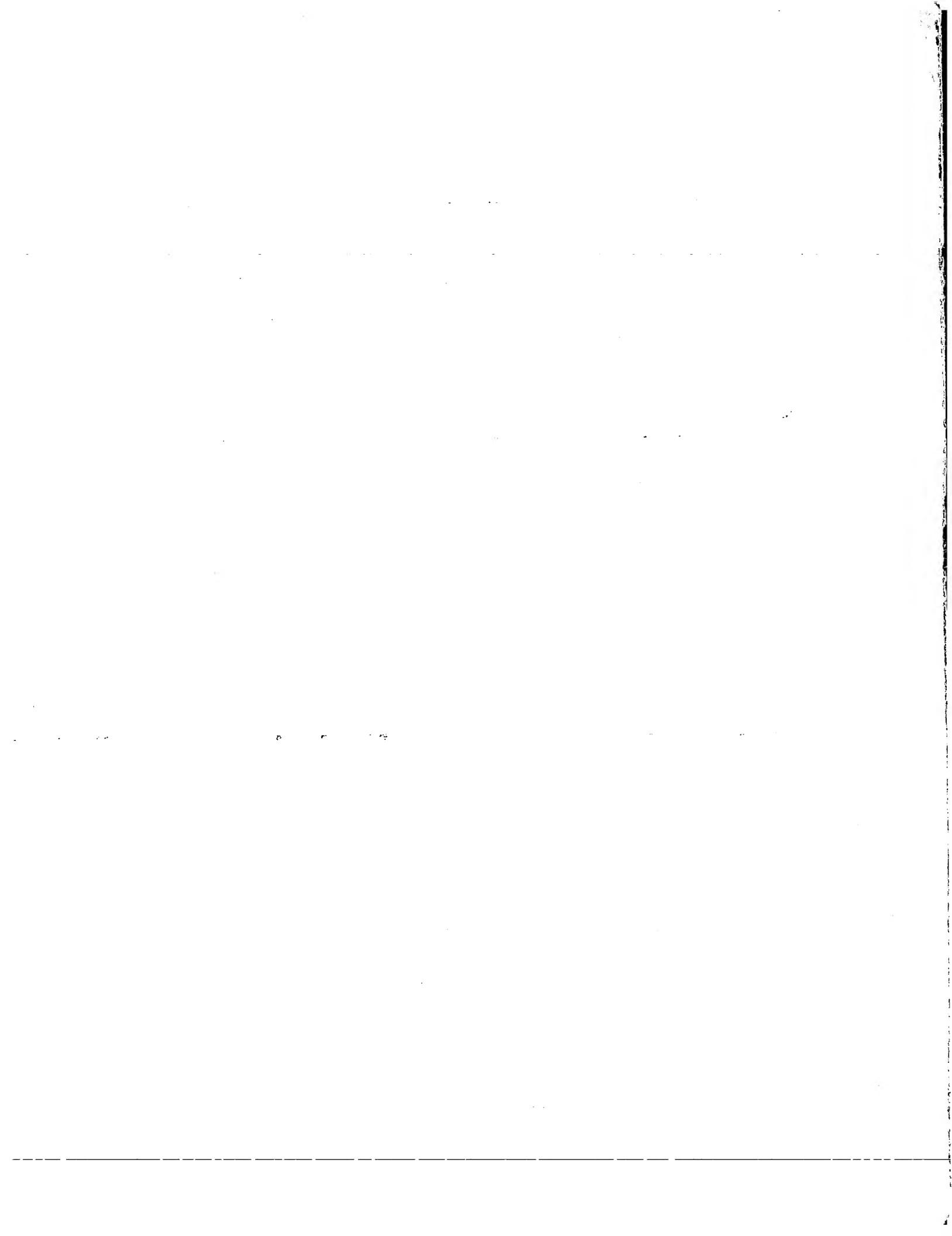
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7. Portable dispenser according to claim 6 according to which delivery means (4) are situated at a bottom of the storing means (1).

10 8. Portable dispenser according to any preceding claim according to which storing dose cartridges (5) are frusto-conical.

Abstract

Frozen aerated edible product can be dispensed from single dose cartridges containing said frozen aerated edible product, using a
5 portable dispenser comprising thermally insulated storing means for storing single dose cartridges containing said frozen aerated edible product, said thermally insulated storing means being adapted to be mounted on the back of a person, and dispensing means capable of holding a single dose cartridge containing said
10 frozen aerated edible product outside the storing means, said dispensing means comprising discharge means capable of discharging frozen aerated edible product out of said single dose cartridge.



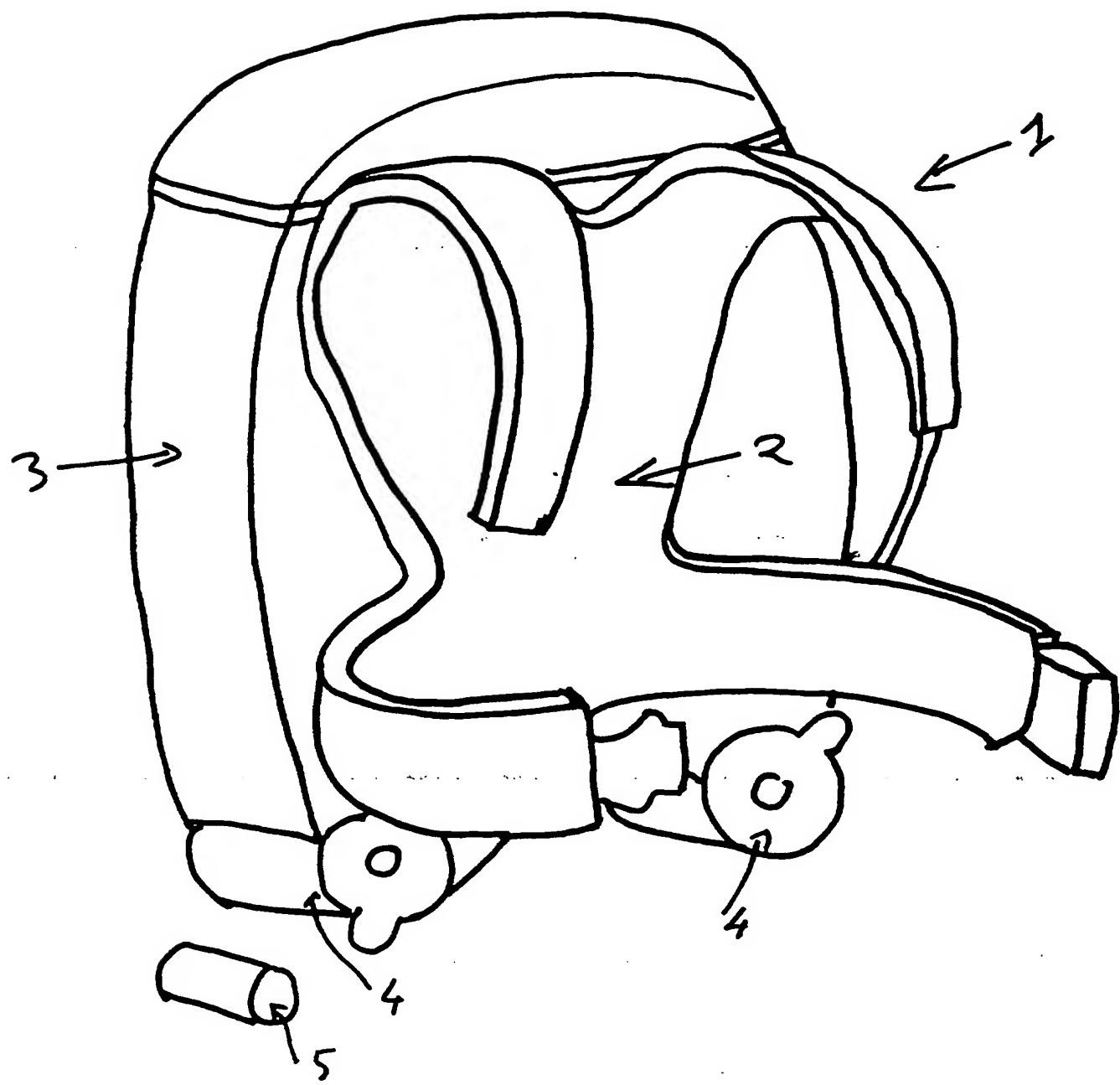


Figure 1

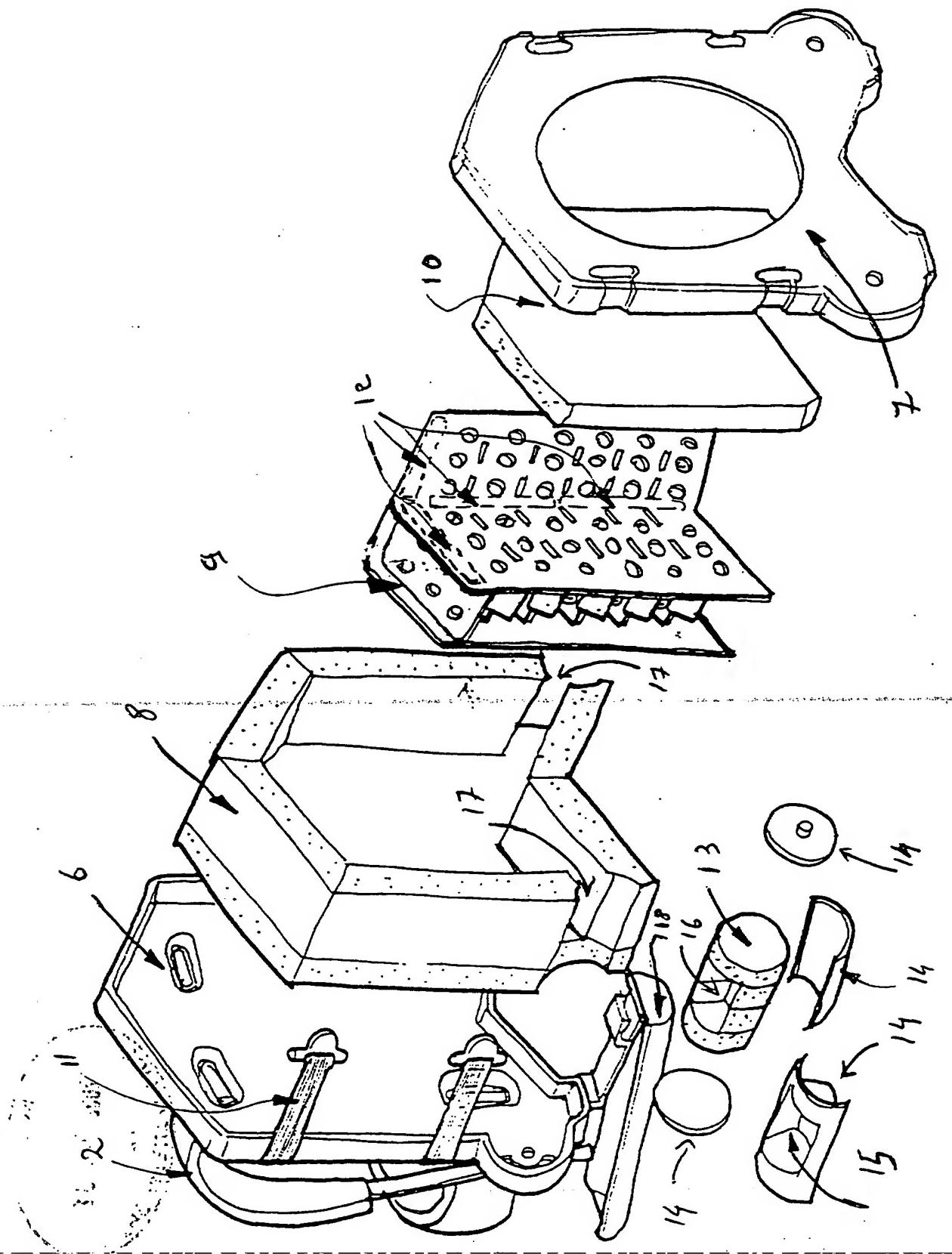


Figure 2

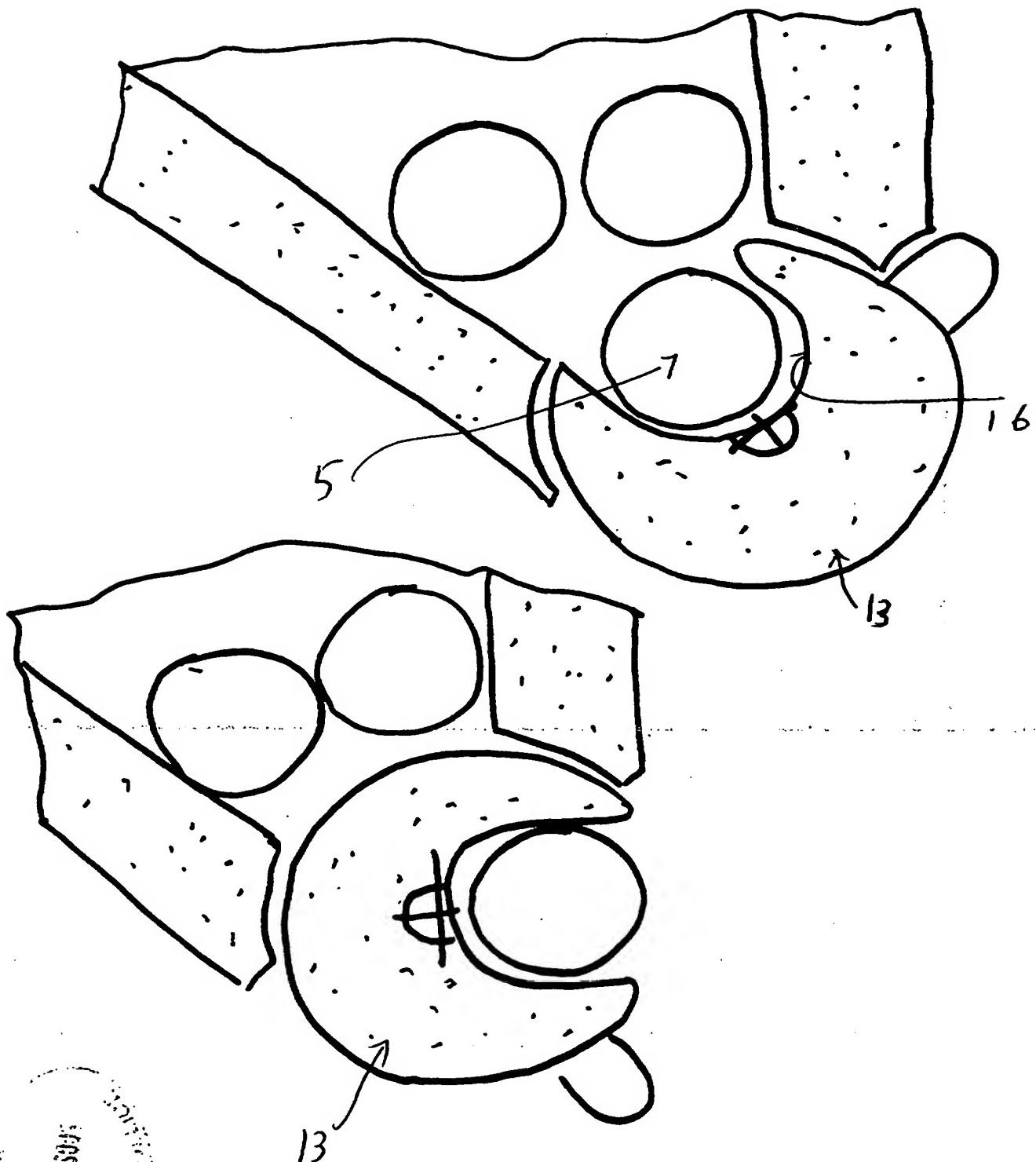


Figure 3



